THE FREER ART COLLECTIONS.

PRESIDENT URGES SMITHSONIAN REGENTS TO ACCEPT THEM.

If the Regents Do Not Do So He Declares He "Shatt Then Be Obtiged to Take Some Other Method to Prevent the Loss to the United States Government.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 25 .- President Roose velt earnestly recommends that the Smithsonian Institution or the United States Government accept the valuable art collections offered by Charles L. Freer, and that steps be taken to comply with the conditions of the gift, among which is the erection of a separate building for the collection with funds donated by Mr. Freer. This letter, addressed by the President to Chief Justice Fuller as chancellor of the Smithsonian Institution, urging that appropriate action be taken by the board of regents, was made public to-day:

SIR. I herewith enclose a copy of a letter sent to me by Mr. Charles L. Freer, offering to bequeath his art collections to the Smithsonian Institution or the United States Govern-ment, together with \$500,000 in money, to construct a suitable building or, if it is deemed preferable, to make a present conveyance of the title to such institution or the Government and a bequest of the sum of \$500,000 for the building. The offer is made upon certain terms and conditions which in my judgment are proper and reasonable.

It is impossible to speak in too high terms of the munificence shown by Mr. Freer in this offer; and it is one which the Government of the United States should at once with as a matter of course. Mr. Freer's ollection is literally priceless; it includes undreds of the most remarkable pictures the best known old masters of China and Japan. It also includes hundreds of pictures, studies and etchings by certain notable American artists; those by Whistler sione being such as would make the whole lection of unique value, although the pictures by the Chinese and Japanese artists are of even greater worth and consequence here are other art pieces which I need not

competent critic can testify to the extraordinary value of the collection. I should suggest that either Dr. Sturgis Bigelow or Mr. John La Farge be sent to Detroit examine the collection, if there is any mestion about it; although I assume that every member of the board of regents is familiar with its worth. The conditions which Mr. Freer imposes are in effect that nothing shall be added to or taken away om the collection after his death, and that e collection shall be exhibited by itself in the building to be constructed for it, with charge to the public; furthermore, that he shall have the right to make such addition to the collections as he may deem advisable. but not to take anything away from it after April next, the collections remaining in the possession of Mr. Freer until his death, and then in the possession of his executors until the completion of the building. These conditions are, of course, eminently proper. •
All that is asked of the Government or

regents of the Smithsonian now is that they shall accept this magnificently generous offer. Nothing whatever else is demanded at present. When Mr. Freer's death occurs land will, of course, have to be allotted for the erection of the building-a building which will itself be a gift of great beauty to the Gov. ernment-and when the building is completed and the collection installed therein, and not before, Congress will have to take some steps to provide the comparatively small necessary to take care of what will be a national asset of great value.

I need hardly say that there are any number of communities and of institutions which would be only too glad themselves to promis o erect such a building as that which Mr Freer is going to erect, for the sake of getting this collection. The offer is one of the most generous that has ever been made to this Government, and the gift is literally beyond price. All that is now asked is that we shall agree to accept on behalf of the nation the great benefit thus to be bestowed upon the

will feel warranted to close with the offer for they are the national guardians of such a liged to take some other method of endeaving to prevent the loss to the United States Government, and therefore to the people of the United States, of one of the most valuable collections which any private individual has ever given to any people.

Mr. Freer's letter to the President is as

DEAR SIE: Permit me to repeat my offer to bequeath my art collections to the Smithsonian Institution or to the United States Government, and also the sum of \$500,000 in money for the purpose of constructing a suitable building in which to house them, upon the following terms and conditions: First—The sum of \$500,000 shall be paid by my executors to the regents of the Smithernment promptly after my decease, and shall be used forthwith for the construction of a fireproof building connected with the National Museum (the construction of which has been recently authorized) or reasonably Second-The interior of this building shall

be arranged with special regard for the conrenience of students and others desirous of an opportunity for uninterrupted study. A suitable space shall be provided in which peacock room shall be recrected com-The whole interior arrangement of the building shall be agreed upon between the regents of the Smithsonian Institution and myself within a reasonable time after

the acceptance of this offer.

Third—The collections, with such additions thereto as shall be made during my lifetime, shall be delivered by my executors to the Pegents immediately after the building is constructed and ready to receive them.

urth-The collections and the building shall be cared for and maintained perpetually by the Smithsonian Institution or the United States Government at its own expense.

Fifth-No addition or deduction shall be made to the collections after my death, and nothing else shall ever be exhibited with them or in the same building, nor shall the said collections, or any part thereof, be re-moved at any time from the said building except when necessary for the purpose of making repairs or renovations in the building. Sixth-No charge shall ever be made for admission to the building or for the privilege of examining or studying the collections. venth-The collections and building shall always bear my name in some modest and

In lieu of the foregoing offer, I am willing, upon the conditions above expressed, to make a present conveyance of the title to said collections to the Institution or the Goverument and a bequest of the sum of \$500,000

for the building, provided: First-The collection shall remain in my possession during my life, and in the possession of my executors after my death until

the completion of the building. Second-1 shall have the right to make such additions to the collections as may seem to me advisable or necessary for the improvement of the collections, or any of

Third-On or before April next I will file with the officials of the Smithsonian Insti-tution or with the United States Government a descriptive inventory of the objects belong-

Fourth-Both I and my executors shall be free from any liabilitity on account of any loss in or danger that may accrue to the collections while in my or their charge, even though such loss or injury shall occur by reason of my or their negligence, or the negligence of my or their servants, agents or

employees. The exact form of the bequest or gift, and the details for carrying it into execution, are legal questions that can be agreed upon by counsel representing the Institution or the Government and myself.

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READY FOR OPERA STRIKE. FRITZI SCHEFF'S NEW OPERA.

CONRIED PLANS TO FIGHT NEW UNION'S DEMANDS.

Appeals to German Singing Secieties for Help and, if Need Be, Will Produce Parts of Operas Which Need No. Choruses-Contract Breaking . He Says.

Heinrich Conried, director of the Metropolitan Opera House, is advertiseing for chorus singers this morning, for he has good reason to believe that his chorus men and women are going on strike. They want higher wages.

On Sunday the Chorus Singers' Union. known as Local No. 14 of the Actors' National Protective Society, made it known that they had a formidable list of demands that they wanted Herr Conried to grant. President Salsburg of the union recited the grievances of the chorus singers at the Sunday meeting of the Central Federated Union, with the result that the central body indorsed them.

This put the chorus union on stronger footing, for now they can count on the support of the scene shifters and other stage hands who have unions of their own. A committee of the chorus union called on Director Conried yesterday and presented the demands.

THE SUN told vesterday what these are. The chief demand is that the chorus singer shall all get \$25 a week. At present many of the foreigner singers get that amount

but the average pay is \$15.

There are 130 men and women chorus singers at the Metropolitan and Mr. Conried has signed individual contracts with each of them. He says the American contingent have started the trouble in the company and the man he blames mostly for the strike talk is President Salzburg of

the chorus un on. Salzburg has been a member of the Metropolitan Opera House chorus for several years and according to Charles Henry Meltzer, one of Mr. Conried's assistants, he was suspected last season of being a trouble maker. He was one of the last chorus singers with whom a contract was made this season. Meltzer says Conried finally reengaged Salzburg after he had told a hard luck story.

It was Salzburg who presented the list of demands to Conried yesterday. The director told Salzburg and the chorus singers who accompanied him to Conried's office that the demands would be turned down even if he had to give operas without chorus. There was some lively talk, but when the union representatives left Conried's office they said they did not see what they could do but call a strike.

This information got to Conried and he ent representatives to the Arion and Liederkranz societies to know if either of these societies could supply him with singers in case there was a strike. What reply Conried received could not be learned. He also ordered an advertisement for

chorus singers and afterward declared that if there was a strike and he could not get singers to fill the places of the strikers he would produce only such operas as ollection. If, in their wisdom, they do not | could be sung without a chorus. There see their way to accept the gift, I shall then be | are five such operas including "Die Walkure," "Siegfried," "Don Pasquale," Traviata" and "Romeo and Juliet.

After looking over this list Mr. Conried seemed to be pleased. He further declared that if necessary he would give operatic vaudeville, that is, parts of operas,

to keep his high priced singers busy. He is determined not to give in to the chorus union, so he said late last night.

Whether or not there will be a strike will probably be definitely determined today. "Rigoletto" is to be sung in Philadelphia to-night, and the singers and chorus day. "Rigoletto" is to be sung in Phila-delphia to-night, and the singers and chorus people who take part in the opera are due to leave on the 2:30 o'clock train this afternoon over the Pennsylvania road. If there is to be a strike the chorus people will show their hand then. If they strike there will have to be a change of bill in The statement issued by Mr. Conried

The contest provoked by the members of the Metropolitan Opera House chorus raises the vital and fundamental question as to whether a contract signed by them is to have any binding force whatever. The Conried Metropolitan Opera Company has a contract in writing with each member of the chorus in which the salary of each member for the

season is expressly stipulated. According to what I read in the morning papers, the members of the chorus now desire to break their contracts and compel the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company to make new contracts with them, at higher wages. This is impossible for us to submit to, for if the first contract is good for nothing, there is no guarantee that the members of the chorus would keep the second if it were made, and having found that we had yielded to them once next week they might again hold us up.

I feel confident that the intelligent leaders of the Labor Union will not permit the wanton breaking of a contract, and I am sure that the public at large will stand by this management in its contention that written contracts made by the members of the chorus should be

kept. Whatever sacrifice may be necessary in order to establish the cardinal princple which lies at the foundation of the proper management of every business we will make. If any of the singers should deliberately break their contracts and we can get another chorus to replace them we shall get it. If we cannot get another chorus we hope the public will give us its moral and effective support in our efforts to provide it with grand opera in the best way that, under the circumstances, may be possible.

The Weather.

The weather was fair over all the country yesterday, except in parts of the Northwest and the upper Mississippi Valley, where it was cloudy, ith light scattered snowfalls. The pressure was falling there, but rising elsewhere.

The temperature was lower in all districts, es

pecially in the Southern and Atlantic States, freezing weather reaching south to Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee, and cast over all the Atlantic States, except Florida. Zero weather continued in the central Rocky Mountains States. It should remain coid and fair in most of the Atlantic States to day There is no immediate storm or cold wave in sight In this city the day was clear; winds, light to fresh southwesterly: average humidity, 45 per cent.; barometer, corrected to read to sea level, at 8 A. M., 30.04; 3 P. M., 30.08.

The temperature yesterday, as recorded by the official thermometer, is shown in the annexed

table: 9 A. M...... 12 M...... 3 P. M..... Lowest temperature, 23°, at 6:30 A. M. WASHINGTON FORECAST FOR TO-DAY AND TO MORROW

For eastern New York, Delaware and New Jersey. fair to-day and to-morrow; light to fresh west to southwest winds. For New England, fair to-day and to-morrow; light to fresh west to southwest winds.

'Mile. Modiste," by Victor Herbert and Henry Blossom, Highly Approved.

An audience that packed the Knickerbocker Theatre last night declared vehemently and at considerable length that Mile. Modiste," the opera in which Fritzi Scheff returns to New York, is a success.

Victor Herbert was voted to have turned out a musical piece of worth, and the laughter aroused by the bright sayings put in by Henry Blossom, librettist, showed that he, too, had done his work well.

It was a great welcome for Fritzi Scheff, There seemed to have been at least a dozen calls after the curtain fell on the first act. In some of them she appeared leading the happy looking Mr. Herbert and the retiring Mr. Blossom and there was an extra hand

"Mlle. Modiste" is mostly all song. There is a plot, though it doesn't tax the brain to follow it. Fift (Fritzi Scheff) is spending her days in a milliner shop pining for the glory and renown of an opera star. Appears Hiram Bent. American minionaire from Keokuk, Ia., who gives her a start. The milliner wanted to keep $Fi\hat{r}i$ in the shop and hoped to do so by marrying her to her son, an artist always in need of money. But Fifi loved a viscount. Family wouldn't have it, though. So she takes Hiram Bent's loan and disappears to carry out her application.

In the second act Fift is the opera queen. le wins her lover's obdurate uncle by r singing, and it's over. Miss Scheff had a number of songs that

caught the audience, but it was as a drum-mer that she got the most applause. With a chorus of men she sang a military thing. and then for an encore came out with and then for an encore came out with a real kettledrum slung across her shoulders. Her show piece of the night was the song which captured the uncle's heart, a bit of nightingale trills and high full notes. She managed her English well in the dia-"Mile. Modiste" caught on at the start

when the milliner's daughters (Edna Fassett and Blanche Morrison) sang something tuneful about a hat. Then came song after song, each meeting favor at once. Leo Mars had two character pieces, one about a Frenchman's difficulty in understanding American slang being especially well liked.
William Pruette used his vigorous voice
to good effect in "I Want What I Want
When I Want It." Mr. Pruette, by the way,
was the obdurate uncle, and he had a good
chance, and made the most of it, to act as
well as to sing.

well as to sing.

Claude Gillingwater was Hiram Bent, and used the good lines he had creditably. He looked the part—money—and talked it. Bertha Holly was Mrs. Hiram Bent, and she had what doubtless was the real Keokuk. twang. She also sang a catchy thing about "The Culture Club of Keokuk." Josephine Bartlett was acceptable as the milliner.

Many words of praise were heard for Mr. Herbert's music. He did one thing. The trickle of the drink finding its proper place has been set to music at last. The pace has been set to music at last. The second act opens with a song by six footmen which took amazingly. At one stage they unanimously vote themselves a drink on the boss, and the musical gurgle seemed true to life. The score was full of those little hits of musical witticisms in which Mr. Herbert delights.

httle hits of musical witticisms in which Mr. Herbert delights.

Henry Blossom's book was elever throughout and compelled many a laugh. The piece was well staged, the last scene, "The Charity Bazaar," being a delightful combination of lights, shadows and distance, But, after all, it was Fritzi Scheff's night, and she made the most of it. There seems to be no reason why she and "Mile, Modiste" shouldn't make a long stay on Breadway. ouldn't make a long stay on Broadway.

GIFT FOR HERR HERTZ.

Metropolitan Conductor Gets a Present From Herr Gorttz and Others.

Mr. Conried will not find it necessary after all to abandon his proposed revival "Der Fliegende Hollaender" because of the inability of Mine. Berta Morena to come to this country. She was to be Senta. Miss Olive Fremstad has been studying the role at Mr. Conried's request and reported to him vesterday that she would be ready to appear in February, when he expects to make an elaborate scenic revival of the opera. Anton Van Rooy, Robert Blass and Heinrich Knote will have the other leading roies.

Alfred Hertz, the conductor of the German operas, got an unusual Christmas gift yesterday. It was an old score of Nessier's opera, "Der Trompeter von Saekkingen," to which was attached by a heavy iron chain a battered old tin horn. An address signed by most of the German members of the company accompanied this present.

The occasion for this tribute is Mr. Hertz's profound contempt for Nessler's opera, in which Otto Goritz is burning to appear as the barytone hero. Years ago Theodor Reichmann used to fascinate matinée audiences as the dashing trumpeter.

audences as the dashing trumpeter.

Mr. Goritz aspires to do the same thing, and has in vain implored Mr. Corried and Mr. Hertz to mount the opera, which gives him the privilege, rare with a barytone, of holding the centre of the stage. Mr. Hertz has always expresed has contempt for the work with such emphasis and begged Mr. Corried not to preduce it with Mr. Conried not to produce it with such pathetic seriousness that his collegues, led by Mr. Goritz, prepared this present

E. S. Willard in "Tom Pinch."

Mr. E. S. Willard opened the last week of his engagement at the New Amsterdam Theatre with a special matinée yesterday afternoon. He and his company gave a thoroughly enjoyable performance of "Tom Pinch," which they repeated in the evening. This evening and at to-morrow's matinée Mr. Willard will appear in "The Middleman;" on Wednesday and Thursday evenings in "The Professor's Love Story"; on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon in the double bill, "The Man Who Was" and "David Garrick," and to close the engagement on Saturday evening in "Tom Pinch." Theatre with a special matinée yesterday

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BARRIE TWICE SATIRICAL.

THE DRAMA QUIZZED FROM PAN-TALOON TO PROBLEM PLAY.

As Acted by the Whole Barrymore Family This Quaint and Whimsical Genius Delights a Christmas Audience-The One

Act Play a Masterpiece in Miniature. J. M. Barrie of Thrums and the Never-Never-Never Land was seen at pretty near his best last evening at the Criterion, riding his favorite hobbies of artistic make believe and Baby. Two of his plays were presented, a one act satire on the ancient figures of English pantomime and a three

act piece making a gentle mock of the conventions of the French drama as she is, or used to be, spoke in English.

Chief among her interpreters were Miss Ethel Barrymore and her brothers. Lionel and Jack. It was a case of Barrie plus what used to be called last summer "The Whole Dam Family." If the occasion filled the noble band of Barrieites with something less than the ecstasy of "Peter Pan," it was still a memorable one, and it proved the best possible excuse for calling

ran, it was still a memorable one, and it proved the best possible excuse for calling the no less noble chain gang from their Christmas dinners.

The story of the three act piece, "Alice Sit-By-the-Fire," is already known to the theatrical public, and—as is usually the case with these Barrie phantasies in satire—to get much more than that one has to get to get much more than that one has to go to the theatre. A Colonel in the Indian service has educated his children in Eng-land and returns with his wife to find them

grown past recognition.

The eldest daughter, Amy, has become what we should call a matinée girl, and, quite ignorant of the real world, has a head filled with ideas of Life derived from the problem play of French extraction, the chief ingredients of which are the eternal triangle, and its single insistent note. triangle and its single insistent note, a bachelor's chambers with clandestine sup-pers and a heroine concealed in a closet, compromising letters and a heroic deed

compromising letters and a heroic deed of self-sacrifice.

It so happens that Amy's mother, who is only just 40 and has shone as the belle of the Punjab, is on comradely terms of affection with a quite innocuous cub, and in full sight of her theatrico-romantic daughter she kisses him good night on the ear. in an instant Amy knows the worst, and, clad in her first evening frock, sets out to save her mother's character and her father's peace of mind by acting in the manner of a real theatric heroine. Then follows a series of situations in which all the familiar phases of the drama of convention are exhibited in a shrewd and delectable contrast, with simple, unaffected reality.

The result is a series of lively comedy scenes made out of the familiar appurtenances of dramatic convention, in which everyone is in turn mystified and rendered amiably ludicrous. It is Amy, of course, who is most ludicrous of all, and not least so when the stroke of self sacrifice which she has planned as a means of her mother's rescue and reformation, as a "happy ending" in short, turns out to provide herself

rescue and reformation, as a "happy ending" in short, turns out to provide herself with the consummation devoutly to be wished of marriage to the aforesaid in-nocuous cub. This is the barest of outlines. To give even a faint idea of Barrie's persistent whims and inexhaustible invention is a task beyond the post-prandial mood of

hristmas.

The Barrie baby, however, must not be forgotten. Indeed, he may almost be called the pivot of the first act, and a very delectable pivot he is, crying off stage in a manner to be appeased only by his father's watch and handkerchief puppet. And there is also a passage of satire on the lack of emotional expression in English children, which delves again into the vein capean.

of emotional expression in English children, which delves again into the vein opened up in the scene between the father and son in "Little Mary."

If the play lacks the depth and breadth of appeal of some of its predecessors, it will be because the public is not vitally interested in even the most searching and sprightliest criticism on the drama. The first night audience took every point with avidity, but it must be granted that human appeal of the story is not great. The Barrie smile is there in abundance, but not the Barrie tear. the Barrie tear.

In the title rôle Miss Barrymore's youth hindered as much as it helped her. As the thirty-year-old heroine of "Cousin Kate" the thirty-year-old herothe of "Cousin Kate she perhaps strained a point; and as the mother of a girl in long skirts she did more than that. Still, as compared with Miss Ellen Terry, who played Alice in London,

of the most finished performances of the evening was in the part of the boy who would not be kissed, played by Master Cyril Smith, who has been imported from the London production. It may or may not have been art, but it was delectably lifelike.

It was in the curtain raiser "Pantaloon" that suther and actors taken. It was in the curtain raiser "Pantaloon" that author and actors shone at their best. It was a satire on the harlequinade of the long accustomed Christmas pantomime of England, and every line glanced unerringly at its mark. So unerringly, in fact, that many of the points are destined to be lost on the American public.

on the American public. There was a story, too, of the simplest and—if you will—most melodramatic order, the whole mingling Barrieesque laughter and pathos at their best.

In the title part Lionel Barrymore lacked the ultimate touch of pathos, perhaps, but evinced again his abilities as a character actor John Barrymore was the Clown, the villain of the piece, and excelled himself in grotesque spirits and unction. The Columbine of Beatrice Agnew was a marvel of girlish sweetness and pathos and danced with all due professional skill, inspired by a strain of genuine poetic feeling. As the baby clown little Miss Leona Powers was a delight. Altogether "Pantaloon" is a masterpiece in miniature and was acte las such.

terpiece in miniature and was acte las such. Suit Case Nurse, Mrs. Dean, Goes to Canada. PORTLAND, Me., Dec. 25.-The police

learned to-night that Mrs. Mary Dean, the missing nurse in the Boston dress suit case mystery, sailed from this city Decem-ber 5 for St. John, N. B.

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MISS HENRIETTA CROSMAN.

Brilliant Performance in a Stale Play Renamed.

If brilliant comedy acting, charming personality, handsome gowns and pretty stage stettings can put life into a dramatic abortion which is also a back number. then Miss Henrietta Crosman may succeed with her "new" play at the Garrick. Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary," is our old friend of decades ago, "A Scrap of Paper," with only here and there the mention of an automobile, or such, to suggest modernity. And that old friend in turn was an adaptation from Sardou's "Pattes de Mouches" of the vintage of 1861.

In its original form this work of the astute and amiable Frenchman is by no means to be sneezed at-it is one of the few masterpieces of the once famous and now infamous "well made" plays of the Scribe tradition. Even in its present form it has passages of effective theatricism and brilliantly diverting comedy. But in its essential structure it shows the worst effects of the old trick of disinfecting a supposedly improper French original.

The sidestepping of a married woman, upon which the whole plot of the original turns, is translated into a premarital flirtation of the most innocent order, and the result, as generally happens in such cases, the similitude of an insane asylum broken loose. As if this were not enough there is a pair of juvenile lovers of the stalest old pattern, whose idiocies would shame a bunch of blithe paretics. The artificiality of the elder French tradition is raised to the power of ten and is supplemented by the inanity of its English contemporary. As the Governor of North Carolina might have remarked to the Governor of South Carolina it was a long time between the scenes that revealed the genuine Sardou. And even at best Sardou is—Sardou. But by the same token Miss Crosman is

Miss Crosman. She has never been more youthfully pretty, more genuine, wholesome and sympathetic. Her method in some and sympathetic. Her method in drawing room comedy is as crisp in its attack and flawlessly natural and breezily invigorating as in doublet and hose. To see her wear those gorgeous gowns, you never would have suspected. Even among the rattling of dry bones of the theatre she was the palpitating embodiment of good spirits and good art. The only false touch was in the title of the play for the one thin s in the title of the play, for the one thing ich this generous and sensible woman is not is contrary.

Is not is contrary.

The support was commendable. Boyd Putnam, as her opposite, and Miriam Nesbitt, as the wife, were both agreeable and able. As the bug catching enthusiast, George Woodward was solid and capable. The only pity is that so much good material should be thrown away.

"AS YE SOW."

William A. Brady Produces a New Play

by a Clergyman. Ellen Terry, who played Alice in London, she was probably on the right side.

The more important question is whether she successfully denoted the emotions of the character, which were as intense as they were varied. Charm and a keen sense of comedy she certainly revealed, but it is not impossible that she shared with Barrie and his play the responsibility for the lack of the deeper appeal.

Still, when every offset is allowed, her performance was worthy of an actress who has long since passed the point of a merely personal appeal. The part is by all odds the most intricate and exacting she has yet essayed, and it is much that she came through it with substantial success.

As the misguided daughter, Amy, Miss

As the misguided daughter, Amy, Miss Beatrice Agnew revealed no little intelligence and skill. As the young cub, Stephen, Mr. John Barrymore played ably but lacked simplicity and a certain boyish distinction. It was again evident that his forte is in broad character parts. One of the most finished performances of the minister has entered his own seaside church for his own marriage (it is perhaps a tegligible detail that no clergy-man is provided, for the ceremony does not come off) there comes a storm which wrecks a schooner and calls for volunteers for a rescue.

The firet. John St. John, D. D., puts on an oilskin, and sets out gallantly with the life savers. Water drips like rain upon the stage: the res ue is fully before the eyes of the spectators, under rocking skies. The minister returns, enters the church again, now in his oilskins, to go on with the eremony on e more, when the injured that he is the result crew is discovered to man of the res ued crew is dis overed to be his lost brother—and, simultaneously, the lost husband of the woman he is about

After the wound which a boom gave him, the errant brother is irritable, like a sick man is, and also keen; and he sees and makes fuse about the sentimental relations his a riss about the sentimental relations his wife and his brother have not been able to conceal. Then comes the departure of naval reserve jackies for service in the Caribbean—and the errant brother is among them, leaving without a word of consolation for his wife.

consolation for his wife.

Last night's audience liked the piece immensely. It is wholesome, and touches elemental emotions a good deal in the fashion of some old time melodramas of respected memory. Of subordinate characters that of Luke Ludlam, by Douglas Fairbanks, fills the bill for the irregular, unsubordinated volunteer very well in aspect and action. Altogether it is a company carefully chosen, in which the work of Mar McCabe, Forrest Robinson and Mac M. Barnes is not to be disregarded.

"THE GINGERBREAD MAN."

'A Fanciful Fairyesque" Produced at the Liberty Theatre.

"The Gingerbread Man," produced for the first time yesterday afternoon at the Liberty, is a Christmas gambol with a cloudy foundation of nursery rhymes. Book and lyries are by Frederic Ranken and the music by A. Baldwin Sioane. The characters included Kris Kringle, who headed the cast and had little to do, Jack Horner, who had more, and Maggie Bon-Bon (Almyra Forest) who, after a flaming star dropped from a clever scenic sky, became the Princess Sugar Plum, and sang very prettily. Her appearances were indeed pleasant times in the show.

Jack Horner, her lover, was sung by Helen Bertram, who will be remembered from the Bostonians, and who has in "The Beautiful Land of Bon-Bon," perhaps the most effective of the songs. Brandon Hurst's song, "Every Little Something," by Margerie Daw (Nellie Lynch), The Gingerbread Man (Eddie Redway) and others, took best with the afternoon audience, possibly because it is a topical song, full of puns.

One village is constructed of caramels for bricks, plum puddings for keystones, biscuits for interior panelling, doughnuts and striped candy sticks for Venetian poles, &c.

The show is called a fanciful fairyesque,

lasts for two short acts, and contains son

easy popular humor—such as "It's a long road that has no roadhouse."

A SORROWFUL "RHEINGOLD."

PROLOGUE TO THE "RING" HAS TROUBLES.

Voices Suffering From Conried's Beefsteak Party and Machinery From Habitual Depravity—Burgstaller a Star Singer for This Occasion Only.

Relentless fate pursues "Das Rheingold." In calm or storm, icing the pole or in the torrid clime, this overture to a tragedy seems to suffer from a concatenation of conditions which never surround the other creations of the brain of Wagner. Magic potions of all varieties are brewed with celerity and skill, swords are pulled out of trees, knights float down profile rivers in enchanted canoes, ships beat to leeward and anchor on rocks and antiquated retainers with deadly memories escort pure fools through panoramic forests with but few mishaps and fewer artistic incongrui-

But let "Das Rheingold" lift the rumble of its introduction, above the horizon of the theatre, and at once total depravity seizes upon machinery and properties and the sands of Sahara settle in every pair of vocal chords. The biessed old stumbling block came along yesterday afternoon with the customary misfortunes to gladden the Christmas of a select assembly of devoted Wagnerites which seated itself in the Metropolitan Opera House.

Some of them were aimon pure Wagnerites, who flashed pocket electric lights on scores or guide books, who talked out loud in the changes of scene and who looked wise at one another when the thematic catalogue of Hans von Wolzogen began to seethe in their memories. But they took no note of of the facile descent of most of the singers from the pitch, nor the astonishing gyrations of the Rhine maidens in the gauzy deeps.

It was only in the first scene that the machinery played pranks, but then that is the only scene in which it has much of a chance. There is a wide scope here for misconduct and things generally went to the demnition Nibelheim yesterday. In the other three scenes the scenery behaved somewhat better. There was a large amount of noise behind the drops when the changes were in progress and the steam is that the dramatis persona is turned into hissed vigorously as if expressing disapproval of the whole thing.

But the singers! Oh, ye gods and little fish maidens! As crows in the vernal season what time the well greaved farmer scatters grains in the warming soil, soar out of the circled sky to earth, and alighting utter

circled sky to earth, and alighting utter discordant cries, so ye sang tunes out of tune, and, falling from pitch, gave groans, and darkness covered your ceeds.

History records the fact that on Saturday Heinrich Conried gave a beefsteak supper to most of the artists of the opera. Now beefsteak in moderation is an excellent thing, but a beefsteak jag is something that no singer can stand. Yesterday afternoon there was not a voice in the entire coterie, with the exception of Burgstaller's, that did not call up recollections of that tenderloin. tenderloin.

Burgstaller made his first appearance

Burgstaller made his first appearance of the season as the crafty Loge, undoer of gods. Now his Loge is not the most satisfying that has ever been known to the local stage, but yesterd y it shone a comet in a firmament of fireflies. And to do him justice he has improved in the rôle, so that now he indulges in human expression of countenance, and one can tell that he is both interested and amused at the feeble struggles of wabbling Wolan to escape from his predicament. He still poses badly, but until he arrives at a realization of the fact that his legs are visible he will never know how much attention they can distract from his song. He sang the narrative excellently. tive excellently.

tive excellently.

Miss Fremstad as Fricka—hoarse. Van Rooy as Wolan, Blass as Fafner, Muhlmann as Fasolt, Dippel as Froh and Rice as Mime—hoarse. Goritz as Alberich—very hoarse. All these singers indulged in departures from the pitch, usually downward. Miss Weed was Freia and Mme. Jacoby Erda—more aloom.

more gloom.

For pity's sake the names of the representatives of the Rhine maidens shall be kept secret. These singers sing badly in the first scene, but they reserved their real tour de force for the last when their real tour de force for the last when the real tour de force for the last, when they emitted tones that touched not the heart but the marrow of the hearer. The orchestra was generally pretty good. Conductor Hertz tempered the wind to the shorn voices and at any rate they could be heard. But on the whole it was not a merry Christmas afternoon at the opera.

Last night a good sized audience was present at a repetition of Humperdirek's "Hänsel und Gretel." Again the legendary and mythical furnished material for a music drama, but with less seriousness. It was a cheerful and short evening. Mr. Goritz had more voice in the evening than real tour de force for the last, when they

Goritz had more voice in the evening than he did in the afternoon and his Peter was better than his Alberich. Miss Alten and Miss Abarbanell capered happily as the two children and the other members of the cast did what they have done before. The orchestra, under Nahan Franko, played well.

County Fair to Start To-day.

The County Fair, the first of its kind to be given in this city, will open to-day at the Madison Square Garden. thing that goes with a well regulated rural exposition is there. There are prize hogs, fat cattle and the biggest pumpkin ever, Also a race track and fakers' side shows. The fair will continue until the end of the week and will close with a big barn dance

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MISS NETHERSOLE IN "SAPHO" A Great Welcome for the Actress as the Heroine of Daudet's Play.

Olga Nethersole delighted a large audience Olga Nethersole delighted a large audience at the Herald Square Theatre last night by her acting as Fanny Le trand. in "Sapho," Mr. Fit his adaptation of Daudet's novel, Miss Nethersole has as leading man Hamilton fevelle, who played the same part with her when the play was first produced several years ago. Save for Mr. Revelle, the cast is new.

After the curtain fell on the third scene last night the audience applanded until Miss Nethersole had responded to almost a dozen calls.

Miss Nethersole had responded to almost a dozen calls.

The performance began the last two weeks of Miss Nethersole's engagement at the Herald Square Theatre. She will be seen in the coming forthight in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "Magda" and "Camille," as well as in "Sarbo". as well as in "Sapho."



on Saturday night.

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